



AAUW
Voter Education
Campaign 2000

HOT QUESTIONS, COOL ANSWERS

(For Internal Use Only, Do Not Distribute)

The following information will help you answer questions about the Voter Education Campaign. This material is intended for AAUW use only and should not be distributed to the public.

Voter Education Campaign

Q: Why is AAUW conducting a Voter Education Campaign? Aren't you being too political?

A: AAUW has a rich heritage in political activism. From the beginning, AAUW has advocated for issues that are important to women and families. We are a nonpartisan organization, and the Voter Education Campaign is an issue-based, education campaign to motivate women to vote. Only by holding our elected leaders accountable can we make sure we protect our interests as women.

Q: But aren't you being partisan?

A: The Voter Education Campaign is nonpartisan and issue-based. AAUW has worked for educational opportunities for women and girls for more than 100 years. The Voter Education Campaign is another way AAUW can advocate for equity in education and the workplace, for women's rights, and for other aspects of the lives of women and girls. We are not being partisan. We have worked on the same issues for over 100 years. It's Congress that is shifting.

Q: What does AAUW's focus on education have to do with the Voter Education Campaign?

A: AAUW is the nation's leading advocate for education and equity for women and girls. Particularly in this election, education is a crucial issue. As public opinion polls show, the vast majority of women voters support a strong national role in our public schools. In fact, they think the federal government is not spending enough money to institute the major reforms they feel are needed. These women need to make sure Congress knows how they feel about this important issue.

Q: Why is AAUW telling people how to vote?

A: AAUW is not endorsing or supporting any political candidate. By informing women about the issues that are important to them, we hope to get them to the polls. There is a lot at stake for women in the 2000 elections.

- We have seen an assault on education, with Congress chipping away at public schools with harmful cuts to federal education programs and money being sent to states with no oversight on how it will be used.
- We have seen an assault on our reproductive rights, from the cuts in international family planning programs to denying women in the military access to abortion.
- And we have witnessed Congress squandering an historic opportunity to enact meaningful managed care reform from which women and families can truly benefit.

Over the past several years, we have fought these attacks and helped preserve hard-won gains for women. But the fight for issues affecting women and families is far from over.

Q: What other issues is AAUW concerned about?

A: While education is our primary focus, AAUW has always spoken out on vital social, economic, and political issues. We condemn all forms of discrimination. We champion gender-fair education, civil rights, equal pay for equal work, reproductive choice, and access to health care. For more than a century, AAUW has been dedicated to tearing down barriers to equality and creating opportunities to help women and girls reach their full potential.

Q: Why is AAUW interested in public education?

A: We believe all students are entitled to a quality public education. With more than ninety percent of our children in public schools, we must do everything we can to make sure girls and boys are getting the best education possible. Public education is the foundation of a democratic society, and we rely on education to support us tomorrow. Everyone's future depends on how well educated our children are today, and AAUW's members reinforce that by making education a priority issue of our organization.



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TIPS FOR WORKING WITH BROADCAST MEDIA

Before the television or radio program:

- Find out all you can about the ground rules. Consider the following questions:
 - ⇒ What's the format?
 - ⇒ Will you have a chance to give an opening statement?
 - ⇒ Who will moderate and who else (if anyone) will appear on the program? If this is a regular talk show or interview program, watch it ahead of time, if you can, or find colleagues who watch it regularly and can give you a feeling for its norms.
 - ⇒ Is the host interested in civil discourse or in provoking conflict and confrontations?
- Choose not to do the interview if you don't feel comfortable with the host, format or topic.
- Rehearse with colleagues, if possible under realistic conditions—for instance using lights, cameras, and microphones.
 - ⇒ Role play for practice—don't memorize.
- Do your homework. Try to anticipate the issues that will be discussed and ground yourself thoroughly in your best arguments.

During the television or radio program:

- Develop three specific points to relate during the interview and make those points as often as possible. Anticipate questions and prepare answers that are at most 30 seconds.
 - ⇒ Remember to look for places in your interview to "bridge back" to your three key points.
- Keep all your answers short and simple.
- Do not make statements that are false or impossible to live up to.
- At all costs, avoid responding with "no comment"; it makes you look defensive.
- Do not allow yourself to be put in the position of having to qualify your answers. Instead of saying "yes, but ..." or "no, but ...," revert back to your talking points.

- Don't be passive or overly polite. Interrupt if your opponent is dominating the discussion, but try to do so in a manner that suggests an easy, conversational disagreement rather than hectoring or lecturing.
- Dress conservatively, comfortably and neatly.
- Try to use vivid language and colorful illustrations.
- Show enthusiasm as you naturally do—but do not overcompensate because this may seem disingenuous.



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TIPS FOR CREATING MEDIA MESSAGES AND SOUNDBITES

Long, complicated statements and responses to media will not be as successful as short, to-the-point answers.

Soundbites are short, pithy quotes that serve as a central, characterizing feature of a news story. They are attention-getting statements that evoke an emotional response in the listener or reader.

A soundbite should compress your position in a quick manner – capturing the attention of the media and the audience.

- Use concrete images that evoke a lively response—images that are fresh, alive and surprising.
- Avoid sloganeering, shrillness, and moralizing.
- Stay brief, and divide longer ideas into short sentences.
- Humor is permissible, even recommended, but avoid cuteness or frivolity that can downplay the seriousness of the problem. A well-conceived quip can deflate even the most carefully crafted opponent's arguments.
- Be authoritative and commanding.
- Standard literary devices such as alliteration, rhyming, parallelism, puns and the like can make a soundbite resonate with the reporter and audience.
- Ironical rephrasing of opponent's statements or popular maxims can contribute to a printable soundbite.
- Remember, the goal is not to earn yourself applause, but to advance your media advocacy goals.
- Feel free to call Public Policy or Media Relations staff if you need any help.



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TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Working with the media can be rewarding, fun, and extremely beneficial to AAUW. Use the following tips to make your experience with the media as easy as possible:

- ⇒ Identify your target audience. The Voter Education Campaign works to reach women—potential voters—to inform them about the issues that are important to women and families so that they learn how the candidates stand on those issues. You should target your media efforts at publications that reach that audience.
- ⇒ Prepare your media materials and talking points before approaching the media.

Reporters generally look for stories that have the following qualities (the more the better):

- Timely information that is of current interest.
- Stories that take place in proximities that are local to the viewership.
- Human interest – stories that evoke an emotional or otherwise empathetic response.
- Built-in conflict or controversy is always an attention-getter.
- Different or unusual angles.
- Credibility – stories that involve reliable sources.

Create a Media List

Creating a list of contact information for reporters and editors of print and broadcast outlets in your area can help you gain media credibility.

- ⇒ Include daily and weekly newspapers and radio and TV stations.
- ⇒ Identify reporters responsible for covering issues related to your effort and community events.
- ⇒ List names, phone and fax numbers, and mail and e-mail addresses.
- ⇒ Find out about the kinds of materials that are suitable to submit and about what columns, departments, time slots, and deadlines are available.

Print Media

Check your local newspapers and make a list of reporters who write about related topics. Call the papers to confirm reporters' names and contact information. Also include editors

who decide which articles to publish. Include the following kinds of media outlets on your print media list:

- City and regional magazines
- Local wire services
- Newsletters of civic and business groups
- Media covering varied racial and ethnic groups in your community
- Lesbian and gay media
- College newspapers
- Free newspapers and shoppers guides that have editorial along with their advertising content.

Broadcast Media

Usually local TV or radio reporters cover a variety of topics, but some specialize. When listing to radio and television reporters, include local cable TV companies and public access channels. Identify TV and radio news directors and assignment editors—they have as much, if not more, to say about who covers what and when as do reporters.

Build and Maintain Relationships with the Media

Television and radio reporters often receive assignments from news directors and assignment editors, or as determined by their specialties. Contact TV and radio stations to find out the appropriate reporter(s) to cover your event or story.

The key to working successfully with the media is building relationships with various reporters by doing the following:

- ⇒ Visit editors or reporters assigned to cover community affairs or other related issues to let them know about AAUW and to introduce them to a contact person. Be sure to make an appointment first.
- ⇒ If you live in a large city, call the city editor. In smaller communities, it may be appropriate to contact the paper's editor. Be sure to also nurture relationships with weekly publication editors, who are very interested in community activities.
- ⇒ When you contact the media, leave basic information about your group and project. Then follow up with a mailing. Be sure to include the contact name for your project along with phone and fax numbers and mail and e-mail addresses on all materials. Timeliness, neatness, and accuracy are critical.



AAUW Voter Education Campaign 2000

Special Action Alert Insert Planning and Promoting Issue and Candidate Forums

Plan Your Forum

- ✓ **Appoint a planning team.** Delegate responsibilities to involve more people.
- ✓ **Pick an issue.** Choose an AAUW priority issue that has local appeal. Use *Action Alert* and *Get the Facts* for ideas.
- ✓ **Work in coalition.** Co-sponsoring a forum with other community organizations will increase turnout and media coverage.
- ✓ **Choose your location.** Make sure your site is well-known, centrally located, and accessible to attendees who have mobility limitations.
- ✓ **Schedule the forum.** Avoid religious or government holidays, dates when other community functions are scheduled, and business hours.
- ✓ **Invite panelists or candidates and a moderator.** Choose panelists and a moderator who are well-known and informed on the issues. All major party candidates running for office must be invited to participate in a candidate forum.
- ✓ **Provide information.** Have relevant background on the issues or candidates as well as AAUW materials available at the forum. Be prepared to answer questions before and after the event.

Invite Women in the Community

- Reach out to AAUW branches and members-at-large.
- Ask coalition partners to invite their members.
- Post fliers in the community.
- Advertise in local newspapers, including community calendars.

Work With the Media

- ✓ **Designate a media spokesperson.** Your spokesperson should handle all interviews and information requests.
- ✓ **Send a media advisory to local media outlets.** Three to five days before your event, fax a media advisory listing the who, what, when, and where of the event.
- ✓ **Send a news release.** The news release, sent the day of the event, should capture reporters' interest. Unlike the advisory, your news release should include full details of the event, including

quotes from spokespersons and/or attendees.

- ✓ **Call the media.** Two to three days before the event, phone all news outlets that might cover the event and explain that you are following up on earlier written materials.
- ✓ **Prepare media packets.** Prepare a media kit to give to reporters at the event or send to reporters who cannot attend. Kits should contain statements from speakers, an agenda, a description of the event, a news release, background on AAUW and the voter education campaign, and spokesperson contact information.
- ✓ **Interact with the media.** Help reporters write a comprehensive story by talking with reporters in attendance. Send a news release to those reporters not attending the event.
- ✓ **Follow up.** Immediately after the event, contact reporters who attended to see if they need any additional information or quotes to complete their stories.

Know the Legal Guidelines

All election activities carried out in AAUW's name must adhere to the following principles:

DO:

- Conduct election-related activities that do not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any clearly identified candidate or political party.
- Gather and publicize information about the candidates' positions on issues.
- Invite all major party candidates running for office to the forum.

DON'T:

- Endorse candidates in ANY partisan election.
- Coordinate election-related activities with one or more candidate, campaign, or party-related organization.

If you have any questions about this special insert to *Action Alert* or would like a copy for duplication, contact the AAUW Public Policy Department at 800/608-5286 or votered@aauw.org.

LEGAL GUIDELINES

AAUW VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Guidelines for Election Activities

The AAUW Voter Education Campaign is a nonpartisan, issue-based effort with three main goals:

1. To galvanize women to vote in the 2000 elections.
2. To inform the public about the impact of congressional action on women, children, and families.
3. To encourage grassroots lobbying.

Election activities carried out in AAUW's name must be conducted within the guidelines set out in AAUW policies. Activities must also be allowable under regulations established by the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission.

Note: Election Activity guidelines for state and local races are sometimes different from those found in federal regulations. To determine state and local regulations for partisan and nonpartisan races including school boards, check with your state's Elections Division.

The Association, and almost all branches, are classified as 501(c)(4) non-profit organizations. (Any branch that has not filed to be separately incorporated falls under the Association's 501(c)(4) status.) AAUW does not undertake some activities that are legally permissible for 501(c)(4) organizations because of Association policy and/or because engaging in those activities would result in taxation of currently tax-free revenue.

AAUW branches and state organizations may conduct many election-related activities, as long as those activities do not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any clearly identified partisan candidate or political party, and the preparation and conduct of the activity is not coordinated with any candidate or political party.

Acting as private citizens, individual AAUW members may endorse candidates for partisan elective office, contribute money or anything of value to such candidate(s), and organize for supporting such candidate(s). Such endorsement, contribution, or organizing activity cannot utilize the name of AAUW. Any AAUW member who is actively involved in a candidate's campaign should avoid involvement in activities that may give the appearance of AAUW endorsement of the candidate.

The following guidelines apply to branch and state involvement in the Voter Education Campaign. If you have questions about these guidelines or any activities not covered in the guidelines, please contact Ellen Buchman in Public Policy and Government Relations by mail, phone (202/785-7704), fax (202/466-7618), or e-mail (buchmane@aauw.org).

AAUW branches and state organizations may:

- Widely distribute *Get the Facts* alerts to educate the public about congressional action on key issues affecting women and families.
- Focus issue education messages and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities on the impact that the election results will have on issues that are AAUW priorities. Those messages or activities must not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any specific candidate.
- Encourage voters to support unspecified candidates who agree with AAUW's position on specific issues. For example, a branch or state can publish a "vote pro-choice" message. A message to "vote pro-choice" cannot appear in a publication that gives candidates' views on the reproductive choice issue.
- Identify particular groups in the community (e.g., women, people of color, people with disabilities) to be part of coalition efforts or to receive election materials. Decisions about which groups to work closely with should be based on such factors as the desire to build a broad-based coalition, not on whether an anticipated coalition partner can affect the outcome of an election. Any Political Action Committee (PAC) or organization that has endorsed a candidate cannot be asked to be an AAUW voter guide coalition member.
- Determine and publicize the positions of candidates. In addition to voting records, position papers issued by candidates, public statements made by candidates, candidate questionnaires, and forums may be used to gather and publicize information about the candidates' positions on issues. Different guidelines apply to each activity.

Candidate questionnaires: All candidates running for the office(s) to be covered in the questionnaire must have the opportunity to participate. All questions must be phrased as neutrally as possible; language must not be stilted to favor/disfavor a particular candidate. All responses received must be printed in their entirety in any publication of responses to the questionnaire. The publication of responses should include the names of all candidates to whom the questionnaire was sent.

Candidate forums: All major party candidates for the office to be covered must be invited. The forum can be held only if at least two candidates agree to attend. If a candidate backs out after agreeing to participate, the forum can be held.

Any publication or oral statement of the candidates' responses to questions asked on a questionnaire or at a forum may include a statement of AAUW's position on the issues covered, as long as there is no call to remember the information on election day.

- Publish voting records for the state's congressional delegation, state legislature, or other body. The voting record must include all incumbents within the district or

geographic area to be covered. Its content (e.g., the votes to be included) and distribution must not be coordinated with candidates.

- Publish voter guides that include the position of major party candidates on specific issues. The information in the voter guides must be available from public sources, such as prior votes cast by candidates, position papers issued by the campaign, or public statements made by the candidate.

AAUW branches and state organizations may not:

- Endorse candidates in any partisan election, including congressional elections.
- Target any voter registration efforts at registering either Democrats or Republicans, or registering individuals likely to vote for candidates who support AAUW issues. The public must be notified of signs (and handouts, if there are any) that all registration information you provide is available to individuals without regard to their political preference.
- Distribute *Get the Facts* alerts or other advocacy materials as part of voter registration.
- Distribute *Get the Facts* alerts or other advocacy materials in conjunction with any event designed to highlight an incumbent's or candidate's positions (e.g., a press conference regarding how a member of Congress voted on budget cuts affecting women and families). During such events, no mention should be made of the election.
- Coordinate any election-related activities with one or more candidates, campaigns, or party organizations.
- Provide membership lists to be used in fundraising or other efforts as an in-kind gift to any campaign. This includes AAUW e-mail and fax lists.
- Utilize AAUW e-mail and/or fax network updates to expressly advocate on behalf of a candidate that is running for partisan political office. This includes advocating financial or any other in-kind support of a particular candidate.



VOTER GUIDE TEMPLATE ORDER FORM
(FOR DISTRICTS THAT DID NOT RECEIVE AAUW GOTV TARGET GRANTS)

AAUW can supply you with a voter guide template for U.S. House and Senate races. AAUW staff will research the positions of current officeholders in your congressional district and send you a computer disk containing the voter guide template with that information filled in.

The template can be provided in Adobe PageMaker or QuarkExpress software, formatted for a Macintosh or PC. If you do not have access to these programs, check with your local Kinko's store. Most Kinko's, a nationwide chain, have computers with PageMaker as well as staff who can assist you. These voter guides can easily be altered to fit state legislature races as well.

Please complete the form on the back of this sheet and return it by fax or snail mail to:

Michelle Artz
AAUW Public Policy Department
1111 Sixteenth St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
fax: 202/466-7618

Contact Michelle Artz at 202/785-7786 or via e-mail at artzm@aauw.org with any questions.

VOTER GUIDE TEMPLATE ORDER FORM

Name _____

Congressional District _____ State _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

E-mail _____

Can we e-mail you the template?

☐ Yes

☐ No, please mail it on a disk.

Computer Type

☐ PC

☐ Mac

Program

☐ Adobe PageMaker

☐ Quark Express

Program Version

(If you have Adobe PageMaker or QuarkExpress software, but are unsure what version, open the program, click on "Help," and then in the help menu, select "about Adobe PageMaker" or "About QuarkExpress." A window should appear indicating the program version you have.)

Format: PC

PageMaker

☐ Version 6.0

☐ Version 6.5

QuarkExpress

☐ Version 3.3

☐ Version 4.0

Format: Mac

PageMaker

☐ Version 6.0

☐ Version 6.5

QuarkExpress

☐ Version 4.0

☐ Version 4.1